

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus for regulating the presentation of electronic media content to a consumer, said apparatus comprising:

an interface arrangement which receives media content comprising a plurality of segments, wherein each segment includes cost factor data associated therewith;

a controller which

examines said cost factor data,

attributes credit values to said plurality of segments based on said cost factor data, and maintains a credit balance associated with said consumer based on the attributed values, wherein said controller attributes a positive credit value to received media content construed as credit-bearing content and attributes a negative credit value to received media construed as debit-bearing content, and

is adapted to adjust the attributed credit value of the received media content based on said cost factor data and at least one additional predetermined criterion; and

a regulator which applies rules for presenting the media content based on the credit balance.

2. **(Cancelled)**

3. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to Claim 1 ~~2~~, wherein:

said controller is adapted to attribute a credit rating associated with said consumer; and

said regulator is adapted to control the presentation of received media content based on the attributed credit rating.

4. **(Original)** The apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the credit rating represents a threshold value and said regulator is adapted to cease the presentation of debit-bearing content upon the threshold value being breached.

5. **(Cancelled)**

6. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to Claim 1 ~~2~~, wherein said controller is adapted to:

monitor the presentation of received media content at the presentation medium;
and

adjust the credit balance based on the presentation of received media content at the presentation medium.

7. **(Original)** The apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said controller is adapted to subtract from the credit balance upon debit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium and add to the credit balance upon credit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium.

8. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein:

the received media content includes pre-recorded media content; and

said regulator comprises a decoder for decoding the pre-recorded media content, as to permit the presentation of the content, based on the credit balance.

9. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said controller is further adapted to adjust the credit balance based on factors external to the received media content.

10. **(Original)** The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation medium is a television.

11. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein the received media content comprising a plurality of segments comprises a television commercial and at least a portion of a television show.

12. **(Original)** The apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein said controller comprises a set-top cable TV converter box.

13. **(Original)** The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation medium is a computer monitor.

14. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein the received media content includes internet multimedia content.

15. **(Currently Amended)** A method of regulating electronic media content to a consumer, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving media content comprising a plurality of segments, wherein each segment includes cost factor data associated therewith;

examining said cost factor data;

attributing credit values to said plurality of segments based on said cost factor data, wherein a positive credit value is attributed to received media content construed as credit-bearing content and a negative credit value is attributed to received media content construed as debit-bearing content;

adjusting the attributed credit value of the media content based on said cost factor data and at least one additional predetermined criterion;

maintaining a credit balance associated with said consumer based on the attributed values; and

applying rules for presenting the media content based on the credit balance.

16. **(Cancelled)**

17. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to Claim 15 ~~16~~, further comprising the steps of:

attributing a credit rating associated with said consumer; and

said regulating step comprising the step of controlling the presentation of received media content based on the attributed credit rating.

18. **(Original)** The method according to Claim 17, wherein the credit rating represents a threshold value and said controlling step comprises ceasing the presentation of debit-bearing content upon the threshold value being breached.

19. **(Cancelled)**

20. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to Claim 15 ~~16~~, further comprising the steps of:

monitoring the presentation of received media content at the presentation medium;
and

adjusting the credit balance based on the presentation of received media content at the presentation medium.

21. **(Original)** The method according to Claim 20, further comprising the steps of subtracting from the credit balance upon debit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium and adding to the credit balance upon credit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium.

22. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to Claim 20, wherein:

the received media content includes pre-recorded media content; and

said method further comprises the step of decoding the pre-recorded media content, as to permit the presentation of the content, based on the credit balance.

23. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to Claim 20, further comprising the step of adjusting the credit balance based on factors external to the received media content.

24. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to Claim 15, wherein the presentation medium is a television.

25. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to Claim 24, wherein the received media content comprising a plurality of segments comprises a television commercial and at least a portion of a television show.

26. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to Claim 15, wherein the presentation medium is a computer monitor.

27. **(Original)** The method according to Claim 26, wherein the received media input includes internet multimedia content.

28. **(Currently Amended)** A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform

method steps regulating the presentation of electronic media content to a consumer, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving media content comprising a plurality of segments, wherein each segment includes cost factor data associated therewith;

examining said cost factor data;

attributing credit values to said plurality of segments based on said cost factor data, wherein a positive credit value is attributed to received media content construed as credit-bearing content and a negative credit value is attributed to received media content construed as debit-bearing content;

adjusting the attributed credit value of the media content based on said cost factor data and at least one additional predetermined criterion;

maintaining a credit balance associated with said consumer based on the attributed values; and

applying rules for presenting the media content based on the credit balance.